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ABSTRACT

Recognizing the intertwined responsibility of state, federal, local, and tribal governments in the education of Indian children, the Indian Education Project of the Education Commission of the States (ECS) directed 69 recommendations for improving Indian education to these groups and to state and local education agencies, governing boards of education, postsecondary institutions, parents, students, and ECS. In general, the recommendations were intended to: (1) increase educational opportunities for Indian children; (2) increase the numbers of Indian teachers and administrators; (3) inspire increased research efforts regarding Indian education; (4) clarify related policy statements and legislation; (5) improve communication between Indians and non-Indians; (6) increase the involvement of colleges and universities in the effective training of Indian and non-Indian teachers and administrators who are likely to work with Indian children; (7) strengthen the commitment of the federal government to Indian education; (8) strengthen state support of Irdian education through legislation and funding; and (9) improve the support of state and local education agencies for Indian education. The report justifies and explains each recommendation. (SE/Author)

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INDIAN EDUCATION

Policy Recommendations

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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INDIAN EDUCATION

Policy Recommendations

Education Commission of the States
Denver, Colorado
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Report No. 138

Indian Education Project
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November 1980

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The Indian Education Project of the Education Commission of the States (ECS) has two primary goals: (1) to identify and discuss the states' involvement in the education of Indian students; and (2) to suggest ways to coordinate federal, local and tribal activities so that state responsibilities to Indian education may be effectively met.

The five states that participated in the study are Alaska, Minnesota, Montana, Oklahoma and South Dakota. A national advisory task force composed of Indian and non-Indian leaders primarily from these states gathered and synthesized pertinent information about existing practices and programs. Through research and task force input and concurrence, the project staff will prepare and disseminate a series of project reports nationwide.

The task force will suggest program modifications — either through policy changes or the legislative process — that could be of value to the participating states, as well as to other states with Indian populations. In addition the project seeks to determine promising practices that can be shared.

The Education Commission of the States Task Force statements on Indian education stated herein recognize the federal trust responsibility established by the Congress of the United States through treaties made with Indian nations, legislation and court decisions. These precedents emphasize Indian sovereignty, Indian self-determination, and full involvement of the Indian communities at the local, state and national level in the establishment of educational policy for Indian citizens.

The Education Commission of the States Task Force also recognizes that the states have the primary responsibility to educate all Indian children and adults while the federal and tribal responsibility is to meet the unique educational and cultural needs of Indian students and adults.

It is further recognized that a cooperative effort between all groups concerned, regarding policy making and funding, must be implemented to achieve the full intent of this report — improved education for Indian people.

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Introduction

The Education Commission of the States recognizes that the states have the primary responsibility for the education of all children. However, it is also a federal responsibility and tribal prerogative to ensure that schools provide the unique educational and cultural experiences that Indian children require, and to permit Indian people to exercise their prerogative to educate Indian children through tribally operated schools. To accomplish either goal, it is necessary that tribal, state, local and federal entities work closely and cooperatively together to implement programs and policies recommended in this report.

The Indian Education Project of the Education Commission of the States (ECS), began work in January of 1979 to determine what needed to be done and what could be done in Indian education. Its task force is composed of Indian and non-Indian educators and legislators, principally from five participating states — Alaska, Minnesota, Montana, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

The recommendations offered in this report are submitted for consideration by these audiences: tribal communities; state legislatures; governors; state and local education agencies; governing boards of education, postsecondary institutions; the federal government; parents; students; and ECS. Some of the themes that emerge are a) increased educational opportunity for Indian children is an urgent need; b) more Indian teachers and school administrators must be recruited and trained; c) more research data, information, and curricular materials are needed in Indian education; d) clear policy statements and legislation in regard to Indian education would be helpful; e) more effective communication is needed between Indians and non-Indians; f) colleges and universities should be more involved and concerned with effective teacher training of both Indian and non-Indian teachers and administrators who are likely to work with Indian children; g) the federal government ought to reevaluate its role and reaffirm its commitment to Indian education in a number of ways, including increased funding, simplified regulations, and more communication with those at the state and tribal level who work with Indian education; h) the state legislatures need to support Indian education with legislation and funds; i) state and local education agencies should demonstrate more effective and efficient support for Indian education.

Task Force Recommendations

It is recommended that tribes

- Develop educational philosophies, codes, and policies on Indian education.
- Develop stronger roles for tribal communities and parents, and exert more influence on public schools within the reservation and or Indian community.
- Conduct educational need assessments and projections of future tribal manpower needs.
- Encourage voter registration as a tribal priority which can in turn effect educational change.
- Develop the curriculum that tribes want taught in the schools.
- Educate federal, state, and local policy makers on pressing tribal issues.
- Become more actively involved in the state political process, particularly with the state legislature.

It is recommended that state legislatures

- Insure that schools educating Indian students have adequate financial resources for the basic education program.
- Examine school board election procedures to see why so few Indians serve on school boards.
- Examine barriers to financing public school construction on trust lands.
- Consider state financial support for alternative Indian education programs and tribally controlled community colleges.
- Work with state education agencies to establish regional technical assistance centers for Indian education, within the state, utilizing state funds.

- Insure that gifted and talented Indian children are identified and served.

- Provide state appropriations for bilingual and bicultural programs that Indian children need.

It is recommended that governors

- Appoint Indians to state boards of education, boards of regents for higher education, and to other educational boards.

- Use the prestige of their offices to support legislation and appropriations for Indian education.

- Be reminded that ECS Indian Education Project Task Force recommendations to state education agencies are ultimately the responsibility of the governor's offices for implementation.

- Be encouraged to hire Indian staff persons.

It is recommended that state boards and state education agencies

- Review and analyze present education policies, laws and other actions that impact on Indian education; then develop written, formalized Indian education policy statements that are based on adopted tribal policies and philosophies.

- Place Indian culture courses in the curriculum for all students.

- Examine Indian representation on school boards and how it is affected by membership selection methods.

- Develop and implement administrative rules and standards for the implementation of legislative action on Indian education, in consultation with tribes and Indian parents.

- Hold statewide public hearings on Indian education.

- Recognize and consider the need to establish and maintain a standardized, centralized data base on Inian education.

- Establish regional technical assistance centers within the state for Indian education, with state funds appropriated by the legislature.

- Recognize the negative impact of school consolidation rural and

urban — on Indian students

- Promote and improve communication channels with tribes and Indian parents.
- Modify tenure laws — lengthen time requried to attain teacher tenure.
- Make concentrated efforts to help school districts with the design, implementation, and coordination of programs that will serve the gifted and talented Indian child.
- Work with school districts to establish bilingual and bicultural education programs for Indian children, funded by state appropriations.
- Insure that handicapped Indian children are identified and served.
- Help local education agencies develop and encourage vocational educational programs for both Indian adults and younger school drop-outs.
- Work with local education agencies to monitor LEA affirmative action plans, to insure that "Indian preference" is exercised where significant Indian populations reside.
- Promote Indian-operated alternative schools where appropriate.
- Place Indians in education policy making positions.
- Establish a state-funded Indian education office.

It is recommended that local education agencies

- Recognize and reflect the unique cultural and academic needs of Indian children, developing specialized programs to meet those needs.
- Promote Indian parents' involvement in the policy making operation of the local school district.
- Promote and foster improved communication with Indian parents and tribes.
- Where appropriate, recommend and encourage the establishment of alternative Indian schools.

- Learn and understand the unique federal-Indian relationship.
- Not only recognize the needs of the Indian community for after-school use of school buildings, but encourage tribal communities to use school facilities.
- Implement affirmative actions that effectively include Indian teacher and school administrator recruitment and that emphasize "Indian hiring preference" where appropriate.
- Require educational needs assessments designed in consulation with tribes, when natural resource development results in "boomtown" effects.

It is recommended that colleges and universities

- Recruit and prepare Indians in all areas of education — especially as classroom teachers, administrators, and counselors.
- Develop and improve teacher training programs that prepare teachers to meet the special and unique educational needs of Indian students.
- Accept the existence and legitimacy of tribally-controlled community colleges.
- Accept transfer credits from tribally-controlled community colleges.
- Expand off-campus degree programs to Indian reservations.
- Promote research on Indian education, principally by Indian researchers.

It is recommended that the federal government

- Reaffirm its commitment to Indian education.
- Immediately begin a program to subsidize a long-range effort designed to train American Indian administrators, teachers, and counselors.
- Increase P.L. 815 funds for public high school construction on reservation lands and in areas of high density Indian population.
- Simplify its regulations for Indian Education Act funding.

- Keep "B" students' funding in P.L. 874, "Impact Aid."
- Reimplement the use of public service employment money for public school construction on reservations.
- Reauthorize Title IV, the Indian Education Act of 1972, beyond 1983.
- Create a National Center for Indian Education.
- Assess the capabilities of state education agencies to provide technical and administrative assistance for federal programs in Indian education.
- Modify civil service laws to seek and retain qualified Indian personnel.
- Increase federal scholarship and fellowship money for Indian college students.
- Require that all Indian education programs effectively monitor and enforce affirmative action plans.
- Provide funds to encourage an increase in the number of tribal education facilities constructed on tribal lands.

It is recommended that Indian parents

- Monitor and participate in all school activities.
- Recognize and practice educational support, reinforcement, and motivation for their children to remain in school.
- Assist in establishing quality education standards for their children.

It is recommended that Indian students

- Accept the responsibility for their own education.

It is recommended that the Education Commission of the States

- Reaffirm its commitment to improved education opportunities for Indian children.

- Insure that in all its future studies, it includes consideration of the unique needs of Indians, and that it also develops — with appropriate tribal consulation — recommendations to meet those needs.

Task Force Recommendations to the Tribes

Tribes should develop educational philosophies, codes and policies

Local education agencies often do not know or understand what tribal communities expect from them. Tribes sometimes do not articulate their exact needs and concerns to school districts. It is necessary for tribes to develop educational philosophies, codes, and policies that will accurately and completely explain the tribal view on public education. This is the best way for state and local education agencies to understand tribal concerns, so Indian children will receive an education that nurtures their self-realization as members of their own cultural community, and as members of a larger society.

The National Task Force, therefore, stresses the need for tribes to develop tribal education codes and philosophies that will promote the needs of Indian children and suggest how educational systems can meet those needs. Education goals and objectives must be developed from tribal perspectives, and education procedures must be implemented that will encompass tribal goals and objectives for the education of Indian children.

Tribes should develop stronger roles for tribal communities and parents in education and exert more influence on public schools within the reservation and/or Indian community.

Tribes often suggest that public schools on or near the reservation do not make concerted efforts to include programs that will improve the education of Indian children, nor do they include parent/community participation in decisions that affect the education of Indian pupils.

The National Task Force for the ECS Indian Education Project recommends that tribes develop a stronger tribal role in public school decision-making processes that affect the education of Indian children. Just as Indian people must vote and be represented on local school boards, so must parents and community people be adequately represented on all committees, boards and other decision making bodies that impact upon Indian children and their education. To do so, tribes must insist on a more inclusive participation of Indian people in the education decision-making process and must be willing to follow through by participating actively.

Tribes should conduct an education needs assessment and a projection of future tribal manpower needs.

Tribal communities have legitimate concerns about the methods by which their children are educated. Also, tribes often do not have adequate information of what their manpower needs are in terms of solving the ecomomic and employment problems of tribal members, and thus, they are unsure how school programs and policies affect their economic conditions.

Therefore, it is recommended that tribes conduct education needs assessments that will accurately and completely identify what the needs of Indian children are and how those needs can be addressed by schools on and off the reservation. Tribes also must analyze and project what their members need to advance economically and to be employed on or near the reservation, and they must connect those needs and projections to the curriculum of the schools.

Tribes should make voter registration a tribal priority.

In many areas where significant numbers of Indians live, few Indians serve as school board members. Local school board members make policy decisions that affect the academic quality and content of programs that serve all students. Many times the academic program does not serve the needs of the individual Indian child, and often does not include the culture, traditions, and language of the Indian community in its program content.

The task force believes that the Indian parent and community have an obligation to impact what is taught their children and make sure that Indians are elected to school boards. The philosophy of the Indian community is most likely to be reflected in curriculum, staffing patterns, and fiscal decisions when Indian people are active in the political processes of the local school district.

Tribes, therefore, must stress voter registration and Indian participation in decisions involving the education of Indian children. Improved education for Indian children and an expanded voice in the education decision-making process could result for Indian people who choose to participate actively. Indian people who vote can also impact upon the state legislature, electing representatives who will be concerned with improving education opportunities for Indian children.

Tribes need to develop the curriculum that they want taught in the schools.

State and local education agencies have indicated that they would

include curricular options that tribes want for Indian children, but usually they do not know exactly what Indian people want or expect from the schools. To prevent such communication gaps, it is recommended that tribes make a conscious effort to develop curricular plans that will detail the Indian culture, traditions, and languages that should be included in school academic programs. Where appropriate, tribes should offer the assistance of Indian people to assist state and local education agencies with the development, implementation and instruction of Indian-oriented programs in the schools.

Tribes need to educate federal, state, and local policy makers on tribal issues.

State policy makers—educators and legislators—suggest they do not often know what Indian expect from the schools that educate their children. Indian people, on the other hand, suggest that state policy makers are unwilling to include programs that will meet the needs of Indian children in the schools that educate them.

Since its is possible that state policy makers do not always know what Indian tribes expect from the school system, the task force believes that tribes should make a conscious effort through their own needs assessment instruments, through seminars and personal dialogue, through written tribal codes, philosophies and policy statements, legislative testimony formal and informal, and through other methods, to make sure that state policy makers are fully informed about tribal concerns that affect the education of Indian children.

To do this, tribes need to become informed about the procedure and issues at the state legislative and policy level. Tribes need to assign selected people to this task of understanding and communicating with those persons responsible for state-level decisions.

Tribes should become more actively involved in the state political process.

What happens in the legislature usually determines what happens in education. Indians are not well represented in this important political process and need to become a significant influence upon the legislative and political processes of the state.

Therefore, the Indian Education Task Force recommends that Indian people involve themselves more actively in the state political process by running for elective office and by supporting for election, those state government officials who will support tribal viewpoints.

Task Force Recommendations to the State Legislatures

Legislatures should insure that school districts have sufficient financial assistance to educate Indian children.

Local education agencies are hard pressed in their efforts to provide educational programs in many areas, including that of Indian education. With the fiscal "crunch," they find it even more difficult to meet the needs of students with unique educational needs. Too, a number of poorer school districts are unable to provide any supplementary education programs, unless federal or state funds are provided.

Thus, the task force recommends that legislatures make serious efforts to provide adequate state funds for both basic support and for supplementary Indian education programs. Additional appropriations by the state will help local education agencies better meet their obligations to provide equal education opportunities for all Indian children.

Legislatures should examine school board election procedures.

Indian people are underrepresented on school boards. Too, in many instances, Indian people must cope with the "at large" system of school district elections. As a result, where Indians are a minority of the total voting population, they find it extremely difficult to get elected. Also, schools and school districts are sometimes consolidated, or school boundaries are sometimes changed when it is determined that the district can achieve "better economy" or "greater efficiency of operation." In some cases, these changes also have the effect of gerrymandering Indian people out of representation or reducing the amount of control exerted through local boards. In such instances, Indian people find themselves being excluded from exercising an influence on policy making that affects the education of Indian children.

The task force recommends that legislatures carefully examine school board election procedures and the at-large school district election process, to make sure that Indian people are not disenfranchised through no fault of their own. Legislatures also need to examine carefully what happens when school boundaries are

changed, or when schools and school districts are eliminated, making sure that Indian people are not thereby being removed from representation on local school boards. Alternatives to the "at large" election system must be sought.

State legislatures should study barriers that prevent the financing of public school construction on trust lands.

While local education agencies find it difficult to fund public school construction on trust lands because they cannot tax them, Indian people believe that states generate sufficient revenue from other sources to fund both Indian education programs and school construction. Indian communities insist, too, that they pay other nonproperty taxes and they generate revenue for the state through federally funded programs.

The task force recommends that state legislatures study the barriers to financing public school construction on trust lands, and seek alternative or innovative state financial mechanisms to alleviate this problem. If this cannot be accomplished, the federal government must be persuaded to increase construction funds.

Legislatures should consider state financial support for alternative education programs and tribally controlled community colleges.

Alternative Indian-operated elementary and secondary schools serve Indian students who do not function well in, or who do not wish to attend, regular public schools. Tribally-controlled community colleges perform a service for Indians on the reservation, which is not provided by traditional 4-year public institutions.

Almost all Indian programs — including the above — are funded from federal programs. While these funds provide for some of the needs of Indian children, they leave a number of voids that the state as the primary agency for education should fill.

Legislatures should provide state funds for bilingual and bicultural programs that involve Indian children.

A number of states recently provided legislation and funding for bilingual and bicultural programs for some minority groups, but have not done so for American Indian children with any regularity — Minnesota and Wisconsin are notable exceptions. Indian children require strong and active bilingual and bicultural programs that will improve their educational opportunities and activities.

Therefore, the task force recommends that the legislatures study

legislation now in force that provides bilingual and bicultural programs for American Indian children. The legislature should then design and implement legislation — as well as fund — bilingual and bicultural education programs that are directed at Indian children.

State legislatures should work with state education agencies to establish regional technical assistance centers within the state for Indian education, with state funds.

The National Task Force has recommended that state boards and departments of education establish regional technical assistance centers within the state, for Indian education, with state funds appropriated by the legislature. Such centers would furnish needed technical assistance to school districts and Indian tribes and parents by providing help at the local level. It is important that state legislatures work with state education agencies to create these technical assistance centers.

State legislatures need to insure that gifted and talented Indian children are served.

Gifted and talented Indian children are not readily identified by schools and school districts. Appropriations for gifted and talented children do not often include specific programs for Indian children, and yet the criteria for qualification may not necessarily be the same as for regular programs. If the needs and concerns of Indian people are to be met by the state, it is necessary that specific encouragement be given to talented Indian children. These students could become effective and accomplished technicians, professionals, and teachers for the Indian reservations in particular.

Therefore, the task force believes that state legislatures must give special attention to programs for school districts that will aid the development of gifted and talented Indian children.

Task Force Recommendations to Governors

Governors should appoint Indians to state boards of education, boards of regents for higher education and other education bodies.

Few Indian people serve on state boards of education, boards of regents, and other statewide education bodies, such as Indian education advisory committees. Indian people serving on such decision-making, policy-defining education bodies could influence the development of strong Indian education programs throughout the public schools and in institutions of higher education.

The National Task Force believes it is important for Indian people to serve on the education decision-making bodies of the state, especially in regard to the improvement of education for Indian children. Therefore, the governor of the state should make such appointments.

Governors should use the prestige of their office to support legislation and appropriations for Indian education.

Research indicates that while states believe it is important to support programs that will improve the education of Indian children, they do not often believe that Indian education should be a high priority. There is evidence that without such support and encouragement too few Indian students stay in school until graduation, and too few Indian teachers and school administrators are available in the total education system.

It is important, therefore, for the governor of an individual state to encourage and support policies, legislation, and appropriations, that will expand and improve education for the Indian child. Whenever possible, the office of the governor should make policy statements that indicate support and encouragement of Indian education, and should create and maintain advisory commissions on Indian education that will indicate further support of the governor toward efforts to improve education for Indian children throughout the state. The governor's budget should also place Indian education as a high state priority.

Governors should understand that the ECS Indian Education

Project task force recommendation to state education agencies are actually the governor's ultimate responsibility for implementation.

The task force has made substantial recommendations that can improve education opportunities for Indian children across the nation. It is understood that state and local education agencies and boards will bear a basic responsibility for the establishment and implementation of recommended changes in the education opportunities for Indian children.

However, the ultimate and final responsibility for the implementation of necessary changes in a state's executive branch rests with the office of the individual state governor. Therefore, the task force requests that each governor give careful consideration to the recommendations, and that each governor make a strong and concerted effort to make sure that not only are recommended changes adopted but that they are implemented by state and local education agencies.

Governors should hire Indian staff persons.

An informal Indian education project survey indicates that very few Indian people are employed in the office of the governor. It is essential that Indians be part of the decision making process that emanate from the governor's office.

Thus, the task force recommends that each governor's office — particularly where significant numbers of Indian people reside — give serious thought and consideration to hiring more Indian people as staff persons. The insight into the education of Indian children that these people would offer would be important to action taken by the office of the governor to improve education opportunities for Indian children throughout the state.

Task Force Recommendations to State Boards and Departments of Education

State boards and state departments of education should review and analyze present education policies, legislation and other activity that impacts upon Indian education. They then need to develop written, formalized policy statements on Indian education that are based upon adopted tribal philosophies and policies.

Most state boards and departments of education do not have formal policy statements on Indian education. In the absence of such guiding statements, it is unlikely that the needs of Indian people can be adequately met by school districts. Improved leadership in this area, by the states, is essential.

The task force has determined that state boards and state departments of education should indicate, in consultation with Indian tribes, through written, formalized statements, specific policy on Indian education, including but not limited to these matters:

a. What Indian education is, as defined by tribes and Indian parents in cooperation with boards of education
b. How the federal/Indian status makes tribes a unique legal entity, and how the role of the state fits in
c. How curricular needs of Indian children should be met by the local school district
d. How tribes and Indian parents wil participate in decisions that affect the education of Indian children at both the local and state level
e. How affirmative action plans should be used
f. What the role and responsibility of the state and local education agency is to Indian education
g. How unique Indian education programs should be funded
h. How non-Indian teachers and administrators should be made aware of and sensitive to Indian student needs.

State boards and departments of education should recommend that Indian culture be placed in the curriculum.

Preservation of the Indian culture is essential to the survival of the

tribe and to the education of the Indian child. Extensive research and analysis, however, by the ECS Indian Education Project and other task forces and commissions, indicate that Indian culture is not often a program priority for schools that enroll Indian students.

Therefore, the task force recommends that state departments and boards of education work closely with tribes and local education agencies to provide Indian culture in regular curricular offerings. Both Indian and non-Indian children would benefit from the inclusion of this culture in the curriculum. Indian children would be enabled to identify with their own heritage, and non-Indian children would learn to understand Indian traditions and culture.

State boards and departments of education need to examine and improve the methods by which local school board members are selected so that Indian representation increases.

In many areas where large numbers of Indian people live, they are often excluded from membership on local school boards when a majority of non-Indian voters are able to elect all of the school board members.

The National Task Force, therefore, recommends that state boards and departments of education examine the methods by which local school board members are selected. It is suggested that methods be devised that will improve the selection of Indian people for local school boards, particularly in areas where large numbers of Indian people reside.

State boards and departments of education should develop and implement administrative rules and standards for all legislative action on Indian education. This should be accomplished in consultation with Indian tribes and parents.

On most occasions when legislatures establish programs in Indian education, they do not describe and define program details, guidelines, and limitations.

It is important, therefore, that state boards and departments of education take the legislation and carefully determine how the programs established by the state legislature will be carried out by local education agencies. It is important, too, and essential that this action be accomplished by frequent consultation, interaction with and approval of all program guidelines, rules, and standards in Indian education by concerned Indian tribes and parents.

State boards and departments of education need to hold

statewide public hearings on Indian education.

Few state boards or departments of education carry out public hearings concerned with Indian education. The task force believes it is difficult and even impossible to determine the needs of Indian children in education without extensive, thorough statewide discussions on Indian education where all interested parties are invited to provide testimony.

It is recommended that state boards and departments of education hold periodic public hearings on Indian education throughout the state. These hearings should involve input from parents of Indian students, tribal officials, Indian and non-Indian teachers and school administrators, and others involved with the education of Indian children. An indepth, statewide needs assessment, done periodically as needed, could provide vital and informative information for the effective planning of Indian education programs by state and local education agencies.

State boards and department should recognize and consider the need to establish and maintain a standardized, centralized data collection system on Indian education.

Recently the Indian education Project for the Education Commission of the States surveyed five states with significant Indian populations — Alaska, Minnesota, Montana, Oklahoma, South Dakota — to determine what data currently exists in regard to Indian student retention, Indian dropouts, testing success with Indian pupils, and grade comparisons of Indian with non-Indian children. Few states or local education agencies had consistent information. Task force members have determined that such information is important to the planning and evaluation by school districts of what the needs of Indian children are, and how those needs can be met by the local education agency.

Thus, the task force has recommended that state departments and boards of education and local boards recognize and consider the need to establish and maintain a standardized, centralized data collection system on Indian students. This data would be collected by local agencies and shared with Indian and non-Indian people involved with the education of Indian children. The information could be used to plan, develop, implement, and improve programs that would eliminate educational barriers that prevent Indian pupils from participating effectively and successfully in the education process.

State boards/departments of education should establish regional technical assistance centers within the state for Indian

education with funds appropriated by the state legislature.

Parents, tribal communities, tribal education councils, school administrators, and teachers particularly on reservations or isolated areas, do not have sufficient sources of materials, information, and technical assistance to aid them in curricular design and evaluation, counseling, testing, vocational guidance and other areas that are pertinent to increasing education opportunities for Indian children. Some teachers and school administrators, moreover, often lack sensitivity and awareness of the needs and concerns of Indian children. Also, Indian and non-Indian people do not always understand state and federal programs guidelines that affect the education of Indian children.

Therefore, the task force believes that state boards and departments of education should recognize the need to establish regional offices and/or area-based offices that would offer technical assistance to local education agencies, tribes, and parents of Indian students. Technical assistance would include but not be limited to these areas: a) professional staff awareness training in the Indian cultures, b) curriculum development in Indian education, c) an understanding of federal and state program guidelines that impact on Indian education, and d) parental rights and responsibilities in education.

State boards and departments of education should recognize the impact of school consolidation, rural and urban, on Indian students.

School consolidation often creates logistical and geographical difficulties and limitations for Indian children, such as forcing them to travel long distances to school. Moreover, established and effective Indian education programs are sometimes eliminated by school consolidation. Also, school consolidation sometimes reduces the ability of Indian parents and tribal communities to participate actively in the schools.

It is recommended that state boards and departments of education give careful thought to these concerns when school consolidation is being considered. Whenever possible, Indian children should not be forced out of convenient and appropriate programs to effect school consolidation. Alternative solutions should be considered if school consolidation proves necessary for economic reason.

State boards and departments of education should promote and improve communication channels with tribes and Indian parents.

Indian communities and parents do not often understand the policies of state boards and departments of education that affect the education needs of Indian children. It is sometimes difficult, moreover, for state boards and education agencies to understand the concerns of Indian people. This lack of communication causes confusion, misunderstanding, and activity that does not always address the problems that children have with the education system.

The National Task Force for the ECS Indian Education Project believes that state boards and departments of education can promote and improve communication channels with tribes and Indian parents through meeting with them for frequent dialogue on concerns of common interest by providing a newsletter directed at Indian people; sharing administrative policy, fiscal, and other decisions with the Indian community and making sure that the tribes have legitimate input into all these decisions; explaining clearly to tribes what the legitimate role of the state is in terms of Indian education; and keeping the Indian community informed at all times.

State boards and departments of education should consider the modification of tenure laws to help Indians.

Tenure laws sometimes protect teachers who are insensitive to the needs and concerns of Indian students. Once teachers attain tenure, it is difficult to remove them. Sometimes this leaves Indian children unprotected from misunderstanding and insensitive teachers.

The task force recommends that state boards and departments of education give serious thought to modification of tenure laws that might require a longer probation period for teachers. It is believed that this requirement would help local education agencies to more effectively measure the ability of the individual teacher to work with all children — particularly Indian children in their classrooms.

The task force also recommends that both probationary and tenured teachers be required to take Indian awareness course work that will prepare them to work with Indian students.

State boards and departments of education should help LEA's design and coordinate programs to serve the gifted and talented Indian child. Guidelines that schools and school districts should follow in terms of establishing programs for Indian gifted and talented students are needed.

The National Task Force for the Indian Education Project believes that individual schools and school districts need to do more to encourage gifted and talented Indian children to make use of their

skills. Identification of gifted and talented Indian children, moreover, is not often accomplished by present testing and evaluation processes and procedures. Additional attention to the matter is needed in order to discover gifted and talented Indian children and aid them in the development of their abilities.

Therefore, it is recommended that state boards and departments of educaton make concentrated efforts to help school districts in the design, implementation, and coordination of programs that will serve the gifted and talented Indian child.

State boards and departments of education should work with school districts to establish bilingual and bicultural education programs for Indian children funded by the state.

A number of state boards and departments of education have worked with the state legislature to establish bilingual and bicultural instruction programs for minority students, but only a few have included Indian children. Often the Indian child comes into the traditional school setting unable to understand or speak the English language. Consequently, many non-indian teachers and school administrators cannot effectively communicate with Indian children, and Indian children are often determined to be uncooperative, slow learning, and even deficient in learning ability.

The National Task Force, therefore, believes that state boards and departments of education need to work with school districts to make sure that the unique language problems and obstacles of Indian children are addressed by bilingual programs. Where appropriate, state boards and departments of education should encourage legislation for bilingual instruction in a specific Indian language. Schools also should reflect the culture of its students through appropriate bicultural programs.

State boards and departments need to insure that handicapped Indian children are included in all special and regular programs.

Federal legislation has mandated that all school programs must be accessible to handicapped children. Individual states, schools and school districts are implementing and revising programs and plant layouts to accommodate handicapped children.

The National Task Force recommends that state boards and departments make a concerted effort to include handicapped Indian children in their planning, particularly those who live in an isolated area and are unable to participate in any reservation and/or public school district programs or activities.

State boards and departments of education should work with local education agencies to develop and encourage vocational education programs for both Indian adults and younger school dropouts.

Not all children have the desire to participate in college-bound courses. A significant number of educators and Indian people believe that where vocational education programs exist at the high school level, Indian children tend to stay in school longer than where such programs are not established.

The task force recommends that state boards and departments of education work with local education agencies to develop and implement vocational education programs designed to help Indian students learn skills that will make them employable, particularly if they do not desire to attend a college or a university.

State boards and departments of education should monitor LEA affirmative action plans and work with local education agencies to make sure that "Indian preference" is exercised where significant Indian populations exist.

In federally-funded programs for Indian students the federal government requires that program recipients exercise "Indian preference" in hiring administrators and staff. Indian preference, however, is not always enforced in these programs, nor is it exercised in programs funded by state and local education agencies.

Indian people believe that their children need Indian teachers, counselors, and school administrators in order to receive an effective education. Indian people, moreover, believe that wherever large numbers of Indians reside, Indian teachers and school administrators should be employed on an "Indian preference" basis. The task force, therefore, recommends that state boards and departments of education work with local education agencies to insure that appropriate Indian preference is carried out.

State and local education agencies have general affirmative action plans. However, the task force has noted a significant absence of federal, state, and local education agency monitoring and enforcement of affirmative action plans that stress the inclusion of Indian teachers and school administrators.

Therefore, it is recommended that state boards and departments of education work with local education agencies to require written, formalized affirmative action plans that call for definite recruitment of Indian staff, particularly in areas where large numbers of Indian

people live, and for effective goals and timelines to hire Indian teachers and school administrators.

State boards and departments of education should recognize the need to promote Indian-operated alternative schools where appropriate.

Many Indian students do not function well in regular public school settings. Sometimes the public schools do not feel that they can provide Indian students with special programs on the Indian language, culture and tradition.

Many Indian people believe that most existing school districts do not do an adequate job of educating the Indian child and believe that Indian operated schools could do a much more effective job.

Recognizing that the regular, traditional educational setting may not be ideal for many Indian children, the task force recommends that state boards and departments of education work with tribes to research, design, and implement alternative, Indian-operated education options for those children who may prefer such choices.

Almost all Indian education programs, including the above, are funded from federal funds. While these funds provide for some of the needs of Indian children, they leave a number of voids that the state as the primary agency for education should fill.

It is recommended, therefore, that legislatures review their funding priorities in terms of Indian education. Where appropriate and feasible, the state should provide needed funding for programs that will serve students in alternative Indian programs at the elementary, secondary, and community-college level.

State boards and departments of education should place Indians in policy-making positions.

Various recent surveys, including one performed by the Indian education project staff for ECS, indicate that very few Indian people are employed in policy-making positions with either state boards and/or departments of education. The inclusion of Indian people in the policy-making areas of state education systems is essential to the improvement of education opportunities for Indian children.

Thus the task force recommends that state boards and departments of education design and implement affirmative action and personnel policies that will actively include more Indians in state education policy-making areas. Indian children and the department itself

would benefit greatly from this conscious effort to include Indians in policy making positions at the state level.

State departments of education should establish state-funded Indian education offices.

Many decisions involving Indian education are made without the benefit of input from Indian people. Often fragmented efforts at the state level, moreover, result in lesser rather than more education opportunities for Indian children, because there is often no centralized source of information on Indian education.

The task force believes that education decision making at the state level would benefit greatly from the implementation and state-funding of a centralized Indian education office. This office could serve as specialized and ready support system for Indian people, the state board and state department of education.

Task Force Recommendations to Local Education Agencies

Local education agencies should recognize and reflect the unique cultural and academic needs of Indian children and develop specialized programs to meet those needs.

A number of national task forces, commissions and consortiums have researched, analyzed and made recommendations on Indian education. Recently, the staff for the Indian Education Project at the Education Commission of the States surveyed five states—Alaska, Minnesota, Montana, Oklahoma, and South Dakota—about how well schools were meeting the unique, specialized cultural and academic needs of Indian students. It was found that many Indian and non-Indian individuals believe that these needs are not being sufficiently met by school systems.

Therefore, the National Task Force for the Indian Education Project at ECS recommends that local education agencies make a concerted effort to learn the unique and specialized cultural and academic needs of Indian children and to design ways of meeting those needs. The task force believes that deliberate action is necessary to improve education opportunities for Indian children and to provide them with the needed motivation to stay in and succeed in school.

Local education agencies should promote Indian parental involvement in the policy-making operation of the local school district.

Indian parents are often excluded from education decision making that determines how and what their children are taught in the public schools. Task force members believe that this isolation is not in the best interests of the children, the parents, or the local education agency. A process is needed that would permit Indian parents to participate in school district policy making. This process would also help local education agencies build, improve, and maintain quality programs that would provide efficient and necessary programs for Indian children, and in the long run, help the local education agency carry out its assigned mission to educate all children under its jurisdiction.

Local education agencies should promote and foster improved communication with Indian parents and tribes.

Tribal communities and Indian parents have a legitimate and legal role in the education of Indian children. Local education agencies need to facilitate this role by fostering better communication and cooperation with tribes in regard to education decision making. Indian parents and tribes could see that cooperation would be in the best interest of their children if they understood the problems, concerns, and needs of those who educate Indian children. Because communications between Indian tribes, parents, and local education agencies are lacking, the national task force recommends that local education agencies take the initiative to improve and expand the communication channels between the two entities. The task force believes that the local education agency could use newsletters and other forms of written communication to keep Indian people aware of school concerns and activites.

Local education agencies should recommend and encourage the establishment of alternative Indian schools where appropriate.

A number of Indian children do not function well in the average public school classroom. Many Indian parents too do not believe that the public school does a very adequate job with the education of their children.

The task force recommends, therefore, that local education agencies study and analyze how well the local school district is equipped to work with education opportunities for Indian children in their area. Where it is appropriate, it is recommended too that local education agencies encourage both the funding and implementation of alternative Indian schools to offer the unique education needed and desired by the Indian child and his parents.

Local education agencies should learn and understand the unique federal/Indian relationship.

State and local governments have difficulty in understanding and accepting the unique federal-Indian relationship that permits Indian tribes to have almost exclusive jurisdiction over all tribal areas of interest. In order to understand this relationship, it is necessary to recognize that sovereignty is embedded in treaties, in law, in court decisions, and is important to the survival of the tribe as well as to the basic preservation of Indian cultures, languages, and traditions.

Indian parents believe that tribal cooperation can coexist with the need and concern of the state to be the primary architect of education for all children. Indians also believe they can and should play

an important role in the education of their children, and that this can occur without negating state responsibility over education or threatening existing tribal roles. The national task force encourages local education agencies to recognize and accept tribal sovereignty over all areas, including Indian education, and to work cooperatively within this framework.

Local education agencies should not only recognize the needs of the Indian community for after-school use of the school buildings but should encourage tribal communities to use school facilities as needed.

The Indian community is not often permitted the use of school buildings for various cultural and educational program efforts. Local education agencies often do not believe it is appropriate for the Indian community to utilize buildings for events and activities that the LEA feels are nonschool related. The task force believes that every activity is learning oriented. Particularly in rural areas where few appropriate buildings exist, it is necessary for the Indian community to use school buildings if they are to have the advantage of various cultural, social and other events and activities. The local education agency should honor what is considered by the Indian community to be school-related and appropriate use of school facilities and to promote after school building usage.

Local education agencies should implement effective affirmative action plans that encourage school personnel to utilize Indian preference where appropriate.

The statistics that exist indicate that very few Indian teachers and school administrators are employed by local education agencies. Lack of Indian professional employees in the public school system exists even where large numbers of Indian people reside, on or near the reservation.

Task force members believe it is decidedly in the best interests of the Indian child to have more Indian teachers and school administrators, particularly in geographical areas where the Indian population is high. The task force suggests that local education agencies should expand and improve affirmative action, hiring and recruitment practices that consciously work to employ Indians.

Local education agencies should do needs assessments, in consultation with tribal communities, whenever the development of natural resources on tribal lands expands the population.

The energy "boom" in many areas of the nation, particularly on or near tribal lands, is resulting in numerous people moving into these areas. The result is that the school population is often increased without the accompaniment of more funding for school construction or programs. Often, Indian children suffer from this imbalance and receive even fewer education benefits than is necessary for them to succeed.

The task force recommends that local education agencies, utilizing tribal input do in-depth needs assessments as energy development on tribal lands necessitates this action. It is likely that expanded school construction and funding will be necessary in many such instances.

Task Force Recommendations to Colleges and Universities

Postsecondary institutions should engage in the recruitment and preparation of Indians in all areas of education, especially classroom teachers, counselors and administrators.

Available statistics indicate there are very few Indian teachers, counselors, and school administrators, and their presence is particularly out of proportion in geographical areas where there are significant numbers of Indian people. Many Indian and non-Indian individuals believe that more Indian professionals in the school system would help to improve the Indian student retention rate and would offer positive Indian role models for children. Moreover, most Indian people do not believe that non-Indians can do a complete, sensitive and accurate job of teaching the Indian culture, traditions, and language.

The National Task Force for the ECS Indian Education Project believes that to expand the number of Indian teachers, counselors, and school administrators, it is necessary to have more and better teacher education training programs specifically directed toward Indian people. Reservation-based teacher training programs are urgently needed. It is also suggested that more effort be made to encourage Indian college graduates to work on the reservation, that local school districts more actively and thoroughly recruit Indians, and that there be a centralized depository within the state, of the names of Indians that would be available to local school districts for possible employment.

Postsecondary institutions need to develop and improve teacher training to meet the special and unique education needs of Indian students.

Most teacher training programs place little emphasis on working with minority children. These programs, therefore, do not prepare students to teach on or near the reservation. Often they do not require courses on Indian history, culture, and traditions, or on contemporary Indian economic, political, and social issues of relevance and concern to the Indian community for prospective educators.

The task force recommends, therefore, that postsecondary institutions make a conscious effort to expand and implement teacher

training programs that are more appliable to the needs of teacher candidates who will likely teach Indian children. It recommends that such programs include components more closely allied to the training needed to teach Indian students on reservations or in urban settings.

Postsecondary institutions should accept the existence and legitimacy of tribally-controlled community colleges.

Historically, institutions of higher education have not extended their services to Indian reservations. As a result, Indian-controlled community colleges were created to fill this void. Indian-controlled colleges serve a very definite Indian population on the reservation and offer academically-valid as well as relevant instruction.

Unfortunately, the Indian controlled community colleges are seen by existing state colleges as competition for students. As a result, Indian-controlled community colleges often are opposed both by education leaders and by legislators. The task force recommends that Indian-controlled community colleges be regarded as legitimate entities by existing postsecondary institutions and be offered full cooperation in all areas of higher education.

Postsecondary institutions should accept transfer credits from tribally-controlled community colleges.

Indian students find that credits do not often transfer readily from tribally-controlled community colleges, and that as a result they frequently have to make up work at a four-year college or university. This is true even though tribally-controlled community colleges emphasize quality instruction. It is recommended by the task force that postsecondary institutions cooperate within Indian-operated community colleges and accept transfer credits from its graduates as long as the school is accredited and/or has candidate status. It is also suggested that staff members of postsecondary institutions meet with tribally-controlled community college administrators and other staff to discuss and resolve problems that center around transfer credits.

Postsecondary institutions need to expand off-campus programs to Indian reservations.

Many colleges and universities take degree and non-degree programs directly to the student. They stress convenience, financial saving and efficiency of effort for the adult student. Students who cannot otherwise attend an institution of higher learning are able to keep working and also attend school near their residence. Not many,

however, take their programs to Indian reservations and/or Indian communities, and as a consequence, many Indian people are not able to earn degree credit or learn skills that they need for self improvement.

The task force recommends that four-year colleges and universities take degree and non-degree programs (particularly in education) to reservations and Indian communities and thus supplement the efforts of tribally-controlled community colleges wherever possible and concentrate on programs for the community college graduate. Teachers, counselors, school administrators and other staff could be granted degrees on the reservation or Indian community in this fashion.

Postsecondary institutions should promote research on Indian education that would principally be performed by Indian researchers.

An analysis of Indian education has indicated that there has been modest accurate research on this subject. Moreover, few Indian people have been trained to do research, with the result being that what research exists is usually done by non-Indian researchers who generally are unfamiliar with Indian cultures.

The National Task Force believes it is necessary for postsecondary institutions to concentrate some of their academic efforts on training Indian people in research techniques and methodology that will prepare them to conduct effective and accurate research on Indian education. Few educators, legislators, and other people interested in the education of Indian children have sufficient data that will help them to meet the needs of Indian students in the schools. Accurate research on Indian education would isolate the problems that exist and suggest solutions that would benefit Indian children across the nation.

Task Force Recommendations to the Federal Government

The United States government should reaffirm its commitment to Indian education.

While it is important for states to fund Indian education, it is also necessary that the federal government take a leading and coordinating role. The task force, therefore, recommends that the federal government emphasize and reaffirm its commitment to the improvement of education for Indian people through expanded funding and policy statements that clearly indicate that the federal government recognizes and plans to carry out its moral and legal commitments to Indian education. A part of this commitment is to provide guidelines as assistance to states for carrying out special programs in Indian education.

The federal government should immediately begin a program to subsidize "a long-range effort to train American Indian administrators, teachers and counselors." The trainees in such a program should agree to return to work with Indian students, and a clearinghouse should be established to keep parent committees and school administrators advised of the availability of trained Indian professionals.

Surveys indicate that very few local school districts and institutions of higher learning have Indian teachers and administrative staff. Many Indians who do advance through teacher and graduate training, moreover, do not return to the reservation once they have graduated from a college or university, thus depriving the tribal community of their training and experience.

To solve the problem of too few American Indian teachers, administrators, and counselors on the reservation, it is recommended that the federal government commence a massive program to train Indian teachers. It is recommended that a "reservation-based" teacher training program be implemented, where Indian people would receive the bulk of their training on the reservation. Such a program would also establish a centralized depository for the names of qualified, trained Indian professionals who could be available to tribes and local school districts.

P.L. 815 funds for public school construction on reservation land should be increased.

Many schools that exist on reservation lands are old, poorly constructed, and ill-equipped. There is a huge backlog of requests for P.L. 815 funds with which school districts could build more schools on or near tax-exempt trust status lands. It is critical to the educational well-being of the Indian child that drastically more funding be provided under P.L. 815 than is now being awarded for public school construction on federal lands. Public schools not on reservations but with a high density of Indian students should be considered for inclusion.

The Office of Indian Education should simplify its regulations for Indian Education Act funds.

Many persons feel that the rules and regulations governing the administration of Indian education funding from the U.S. Office of Indian Education are unduly complicated. They believe, too, that fewer, simplified and nonduplicatory regulations would improve the administration of Indian education programs funded through the Office of Indian Education. Indian and non-Indian people also believe that positive gains resulting in more effective use of federal funds would result from this effort to simplify federal regulations, affecting the administration of Indian programs.

The Department of Education should keep "B" students funding in P.L. 874, Impact Aid.

Currently schools receive 100 percent of fund entitlement for children whose parents reside on and are employed on tax-exempt federal property, but only 50 percent on fund entitlement for "B" classification children whose parents live on but work off federally-controlled, tax-exempt property, or who live off but work on such property. Futhermore, the Department of Education has under advisement a plan that would eliminate all "B" classification students from the funding component for P.L. 874.

Indian people believe that the federal government does not now provide enough funds for Indian education. The task force believes that eliminating "B" students from the funding component for P.L. 874 would be detrimental to the education Indian children, and rather than abolish it, the Department of Education should provide full parity of funding for "B" students similar to that provided for "A" students on Indian reservations.

Public service employment money should be reimplemented for public school construction on reservations.

Many reservations are without adequate public school facilities for Indian children. Many Indian people are also unemployed on or near the reservation. At various times public service employment has provided funds to create employment particularly in periods of low economic activity.

The task force believes it would be to the advantage of the federal government to reinstitute public service employment projects that would aid the Indian reservation economy, such a move would also help to decrease the tremendous "backlog" of requests that now exist for school construction on reservations and also stimulate the construction industry.

Congress should reauthorize Title IV of the Indian Education Act of 1972 beyond 1983.

Title IV of the Indian Education Act of 1972 has improved education opportunities for Indian children and has increased Indian student retention in school. People who work with Title IV programs believe they work better and are more effective than previous programs for the education of Indian children.

It is essential that Congress reauthorize Title IV of the Indian Education Act beyond 1983 if Indian children are to continue their progress toward equity with other children attending school.

Congress should create a National Center for Indian Education.

At any given time, it is difficult to determine what materials, information, research, statistics, and other activities exists on Indian education throughout the nation. Many times, both Indian and non-Indian educators, legislators, and others concerned with Indian education need technical assistance with legislation, policy statements, affirmative action plans, curriculum, and other areas, but do not have any place to obtain this help.

It is recommended that Congress create a National Center for Indian Education that would act as a centralized depository of curriculum materials, research and other information on Indian education. This center would also furnish technical assistance to tribes, legislators, education policy makers, and others concerned with Indian education as requested.

The federal government should assess the capabilities of state education agencies to provide technical and administrative assistance for federal programs in Indian education.

As part of its Indian "self -determination" policy, the federal government often bypasses the state education agency and goes directly to local school districts. States do not believe they should be bypassed, and tribes do not believe that states should participate. As a result confusion exists in the administration of Indian education programs.

Indian people want policy control of the education of Indian children. However, the federal government should determine how the state government agency can better participate in the administration of Indian education programs, without sacrificing Indian self-determination in regard to the education of Indian children.

The federal government should modify civil service laws so that Indian personnel can be recruited and retained by appropriate agencies.

Civil services laws often work to the detriment of the individual Indian applicant for a federal position. Many times, too, federal agencies find that civil service laws are so restrictive and application procedures so tedious that they cannot employ otherwise qualified Indian people.

It it recommended that Congress and affected federal agencies make a serious effort to study, analyze, and make recommendations that will improve the employability of qualified Indian people for various federal positions.

Increase federal scholarship and fellowship money for Indian students.

As opportunities increase for Indians to attend institutions of higher learning, and vocational schools, the need also increases for scholarships. Most Indian students cannot expect any financial assistance from their families and many come from such poor economic backgrounds that they are often unable to earn enough money to pay their college expense.

The National Task Force for the Indian Education Project recommends that the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Office of Indian Education increase their scholarship and fellowship money for Indian students so that more will be able to attend the four-year college or university or vocational school of their choice. 't is also suggested that funding of Indian scholarships be increased to help many more Indian young people advance into professional education positions, as they have not done in the past.

The federal government should monitor and enforce affirmative action plans.

In many areas where large numbers of Indian people reside, few Indian teachers and school administrators are employed by individual school districts. This occurs despite the presence of school district affirmative action plans.

To correct this problem, the national task force recommends the federal government improve the monitoring and enforcement of school district affirmative action plans that impact upon Indian people so that more Indians will be recruited and employed by school districts, particularly where significant numbers of Indian people reside.

The federal government should provide funds to encourage the construction of expanded education facilities on tribal lands.

A number of tribal communities have created education departments on the reservation to serve as a focus for Indian education activities. Limited funds prevent many of these tribal education councils from effectively and efficiently serving Indian people as they should, with much of the failure caused by inadequate facilities.

It is recommended that the federal government include funding of expanded education facilities on tribal lands as an important priority in the future. Indian people would greatly benefit from such an action designed to upgrade education opportunites on the reservation.

Task Force Recommendations to Indian Parents

Indian parents should participate in all school activities.

It is important that individual parents participate actively in all school activities, including parent-teacher conferences, school boards functions, information seminars and workshops presented by schools, so that they will know how the local school interacts with and educates their children. Local education agencies often remark that Indian parents do not actively participate in the school activities that are open to them.

The task force recommends that individual Indian parents give serious consideration to active and complete participation in all school activities concerned with both the classroom and after-classroom education of their children. Such involvement would help to keep them aware of what schools were doing or not doing for their children, as well as keep them actively involved in all education decision making involving their children. It could also possibly encourage Indian children to remain in school.

Indian parents need to recognize and offer motivation reinforcement and educational support to their children to stay in school.

State and local education agencies often suggest they do all they can do to encourage Indian students to remain in school to graduation, but that parents of Indian pupils do not support them in this effort. Various research projects, including one recently completed by the Indian Education staff at the Education Commission of the States, indicate that some Indian parents do not always believe that the present education is desirable or essential to the well-being of their children, and therefore, do not encourage their children to regularly attend school.

Education opportunities for Indian children that include instruction in their own culture, traditions, and language need to increase, but so does the need for Indian parents to encourage their children to remain in school until graduation. Employment opportunities must increase for Indian children, but so must parental guidance so their children avoid excessive absences from school. Education does not guarantee economic success and security, but as states, the federal

government, and the tribes create and improve employment opportunities for Indians, the importance of graduation from a high school, becomes even more crucial. Therefore, parents must support their children's education as well as motivate them to attend and complete school.

Parents must also continue to seek the needed changes in the schools in those areas that hamper the success of Indian students.

Indian parents should help local education agencies to establish and maintain quality education standards in the schools.

Education standards in an individual school could prevent children from obtaining a successful education if the standards are unrealistic in terms of a child's culture. Indian children in particular suffer sometimes from standards that do not take into consideration the Indian culture with different values.

The task force believes it is essential that Indian parents be included in the decision-making process that determines the education standards that will guide individual schools in the education of their children. To be excluded could result in an education program that would not be geared to the needs of Indian students.

Task Force Recommendations to Indian Students

Indian students need to accept responsibility for their own education.

In response to surveys, Indian students often say that a lack of specific curricular options, coping with insensitive teachers and school administrators, and other actions and activities prevent them from staying in school until graduation. Moreover, they often suggest that parents dependent on alcohol and drugs, and living in extreme poverty prevent them from being able to remain in school.

Evidence clearly shows that these conditions do prevent individual Indian children from succeeding in school at any level. However, it is also apparent that a number of Indian children manage to work their way through difficult and often impossible conditions to graduation and on to successful careers. The National Task Force of the ECS Indian Education Project believes that Indian students need to accept a very basic responsibility for their own individual education and make strong, concerted efforts to work their way through the education process as many other Indian pupils have already done. The desire to succeed matched by equal determination, can be the key to educational success.

Task Force Recommendations to the Education Commission of the States

The Education Commission of the States should reaffirm its commitment to improved education opportunites for Indian children.

The Education Commission of the States has passed a number of resolutions that indicate its basic support for the improvement of education opportunities for Indian children. Various individuals at ECS, within the elementary/secondary department in particular, have designed project proposals to advance education opportunities for Indian children.

The National Task Force for the Indian Education Project at ECS recognizes not only the accomplishments of the present activity, but emphasizes also that the Education Commission of the states must continue to affirm its basic commitment to improve education for Indians. This can be done by sharing present project results with the various government entities, supporting the recommendations submitted by the National Task Force, and by presenting to the ECS membership supporting resolutions designed to encourage improved education opportunities for Indian children.

The Education Commission of the States in all its future studies and projects should address the unique needs of Indians and develop recommendations to meet those needs, with appropriate tribal consultation.

Indian needs and concerns will always require the constant attention of federal, state, local and tribal governments. It is important that the Education Commission of the States use its expertise, resources, and interaction with various government entities to advance the cause of Indian education at every possible opportunity.

To do so it is essential that ECS continue to study, analyze and make recommendations that will improve education opportunities for Indian children. The National Task Force for the Indian Education Project believes that not only are future projects necessary in this area under the guidance of ECS, but that all projects developed

within this organization should reflect the education needs of Indian children in their research, deliberations and project recommendations, insofar as it is feasible for ECS to do so.

Indian Education reports available from the ECS Publications Department:

Report No. 135
Indian Education: Involvement of Federal, State and Tribal Governments

Report No. 136
Indian Education: Problems in Need of Resolution

Report No. 137
Indian Education: Selected Programs and Practices

Report No. 138
Indian Education: Policy Recommendations

Report No. 139
Indian Education: An Overview of State Laws and Policies

Report No. 140
Indian Education: Final Project Report

Additional copies of these reports may be obtained from the Publications Department, Education Commission of the States, Suite 300, 1860 Lincoln St., Denver, Colorado 80295. Please enclose $3 for the first report ordered. For each subsequent copy of any report listed above, please add 30¢. This price covers postage and handling. Prepayment required.